

Nineveh Bridge
Spanning Old Channel of Chariton River
Connelssville Vicinity
Adair County
Missouri

HAER No. MO-59

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P. O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
NINEVEH BRIDGE

I. INTRODUCTION

Location:	The bridge is on an old channel of the Chariton River east of the past town of Nineveh. The bridge is located one quarter mile east of the southeast corner of the town of Connelssville in Section 9 of Township 63 North, Range 16 West, Adair County, Missouri.
Quadrangle:	Connelssville 7.5 minute series
UTM:	Zone 15/N4457940/E526360
Construction Date:	Early 1885
Modifications:	Late 1899 approach removal
Ownership:	Adair County Court Kirksville, Missouri
Present Use:	Farm to market access across an abandoned Chariton River channel.
Significance:	A well preserved example of an early high Pratt through truss bridge with an unmodified main span including plate iron with angle iron flange constructed floor beams and wood stringers.
Historians:	Tom Gage, PhD. American History. Craig Sturdevant, M.A. Anthropology. John Carrel

II. HISTORY

A. Need for the Bridge:

The present structure replaced an earlier wooden bridge which was in need of frequent repairs. On February 6, 1884, John Baggs had replaced pilings and had some difficulty in obtaining approval and payment from the county court who felt the pilings were too small in diameter and not sufficiently driven.¹ The court later recanted and approved the payment of \$70.00 suggesting that it was the sad condition of the existing wooden structure rather than Mr. Baggs' work.² Further repairs were made on the wooden bridge and presented to the court May 6, 1884³ and on October 3, 1884 which was two months after the court had ordered construction of the new Nineveh Bridge.⁴ On August 5, 1884, the County Road and Bridge Commission ordered the construction of an iron bridge across the Chariton River near the town of Nineveh for an estimated \$4000.00.⁵

The Nineveh Bridge namesake was a nearby communist community developed by Dr. William Kiel from Bethel, Missouri during the 1860's. The community dissolved following Kiel's death in 1877.⁶ Connelville was incorporated in 1904 in the area in which Nineveh had been located. Since wood bridge construction was phased out from the 1850's through the 1860's, it can be conjectured that the Nineveh Bridge crossing by the wooden bridge had been present for several years prior to the construction of the Nineveh Bridge.⁷ While unconfirmed, it is quite probable that once routes were established which included major river crossings, subsequent development and dependence upon such routes would have been important factors in decisions to replace failing wooden bridges with the modern wrought iron and steel structures. A statewide inventory of bridges is currently underway which will allow placement of iron and steel truss bridge construction in the state context when completed by Fraser Design.

B. Construction History:

W. J. Hobson put up a bond of \$6,000 and was given the contract to construct the Nineveh Bridge.⁸ No other information has been found regarding W. J. Hobson.⁹ John R. Dover was the overseer of the rock work on the original piers and abutments for which he was paid \$24.00 on January 6, 1885 and \$45.00 on February 4, 1885.¹⁰ On February 6, 1885 W. J. Hobson sought \$1,500.00 as partial payment of which the county court disallowed \$500.00.¹¹ On May 5, 1885, Joe McIvie received a contract for \$485.00 to build the approaches for the bridge.¹² On May 13, 1885 the county court approved a balance of \$2,198.00 to be paid to Mr. Hobson for his work on the bridge.¹³

III. THE BRIDGE

The Nineveh Bridge is a pin connected 120 foot long, 16 foot 4 inch wide, 6 panel pratt high through truss with a 14 foot wide roadway and 18 feet of vertical clearance. The bridge rises 20 feet above the oak stringers which in turn are supported by 6 inch by 18 inch floor beams constructed of rolled steel plate with riveted 3 inch angle iron flanges on both sides, top, bottom, and ends. The inclined end posts and top chords are 14 inch rolled steel plate over 8 inch channels with horizontal webbing. The portal strut and bracing is a 2 inch wide town lattice. The struts are 6 inch I beams. The top and bottom lateral bracing is 3/4 inch round bar as is the counter bracing. The bottom chords in the first and sixth panels are paired 3/8 inch by 3 inch flat eye bars; second and fifth panels are 1/2 by 3 inch paired flat eye bars; and the third and fourth panels are 1 inch by 3 1/2 inch paired flat eye bars. The hip verticals are paired 3/8 by 1 1/2 inch flat eye bars. The diagonals are 1/2 by 1 1/2 inch flat eye bars and the vertical posts are paired 6 inch channels with diagonal webbing.

IV. MODIFICATIONS

During December 1899 the Nineveh Bridge approaches were removed and replaced with earth fills.¹⁴ The reasons for this modification are not given in the county record. While unconfirmed, it is probable that channelization of a portion of the Chariton River in this vicinity resulted in abandonment of the Chariton River channel which Nineveh originally crossed. The channel could be narrowed by fills which would not wash out and would be more easily maintained than the steel and wood approaches.

V. THE PROJECT

The Nineveh Bridge is scheduled for replacement by a bridge which will carry a greater traffic load. The 19th century structure is incapable of sustaining late 20th century traffic needs. The new bridge will be constructed in 1990.

The present study found Adair County bridge records quite incomplete. Several days of record review resulted in the limited data presented here.

V. FOOTNOTES

- 1 Adair County, County Court Record, 6 February 1884.
- 2 County Court Record, 6 February 1884.
- 3 County Court Record, 6 May 1884.
- 4 County Court Record, 3 October 1884.
- 5 County Court Record, 3 February 1885.
- 6 Williams, Walter, ed., A History of Northeast Missouri Vol. 1, (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1913), 183.
- 7 Waddell, J. A. L., Bridge Engineering, Vol. 1, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.), 22-23.

8 County Court Record, 4 February 1885.

9 Williams, Walter, ed., A History of Northeast Missouri, Vols. 1, 2, 3.

Conard, H. L., Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri, Vol. 2, (St. Louis: Southern History Company, 1901).

10 County Court Record, 4 February 1885.

11 County Court Record, 5 February 1885.

12 County Court Record, 5 May 1885.

13 County Court Record, 13 May 1885.

14 County Court Record, 3 December 1899.

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Conard, H. L., Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri, Vol. 1. New York: Southern History Company, 1901.

Waddell, J. A. L., Bridge Engineering, Vol. 1. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1916.

Williams, Walter, ed., A History of Northeast Missouri. New York: Lewis Publishing Company. 1913.

B. OTHER

Adair County County Court Records, located in the Adair County Courthouse, Kirksville, Missouri.